

REMARKS

The present application is a divisional of U.S. Application Serial No. No. 09/156,367. The parent application was subject to a restriction requirement, and original claims 1-32 were pursued in that application.

The present application is directed to the remaining claims, i.e. claims 33-43. These claims have been amended in order to take into account subsequent developments during the prosecution of the parent application.

Early and favorable action on the pending claims in this application is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP CLAIMS

33. (Amended) A method for assessing a compound's ability to inhibit MLK [and/or JNK] kinase activity and thereby prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition, comprising:

- (a) administering to an animal an amount of compound under conditions sufficient to allow for proper pharmacodynamic absorption and distribution thereof in the animal; and
- (b) determining the physiological status of the animal; wherein a change in physiological status, when compared to an animal not administered the compound, is indicative of the compound's ability to inhibit MLK kinase activity and thereby prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition.

34. (Amended) The method of Claim 33, wherein MLK is MLK1, MLK2 or MLK3 [and JNK is JNK1, JNK2 or JNK3], or combinations thereof.

36. (Amended) A method for treating a neurological condition in a mammal in need thereof, comprising administering to the mammal an effective therapeutic amount of a compound that inhibits [JNK and/or] MLK activity and thereby prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having neurological condition.

39. (Amended) The method of claim 36, wherein [JNK is JNK1, JNK2 or JNK3 and] MLK is MLK1, MLK2, or MLK3, or combinations thereof.

40. (Amended) A method for preventing neuronal cell death in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition, comprising administering to the mammal in need thereof an effective therapeutic amount of a compound that inhibits [JNK and/or] MLK activity

in a neuronal cell and thereby prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition.

43. (Amended) A method for treating a neurological disorder in a mammal in need thereof, comprising administering to the mammal an effective therapeutic amount of a compound that inhibits [JNK and/or] MLK activity and thereby prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition, wherein the compound is identified by a method for assessing a compound's ability to prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition, comprising:

- a) contacting a compound with neuronal cells having activated MLK [and/or JNK] kinase activity; and
- b) determining the number of neuronal cells that die;

wherein a decreased number of dead neuronal cells in the presence of the compound compared to the number of dead neuronal cells in the absence of the compound is indicative of the compound's ability to prevent neuronal cell death occurring in a mammal susceptible to or having a neurological condition.